



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## SDNG DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY SCHEDULED FOR PIERRE UNIT

A deployment ceremony is scheduled for about 70 soldiers with the South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion on Saturday, July 27, at 2 p.m. at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre.

The public is encouraged to attend the event as the units depart for a nine month deployment to the Middle East to provide multifunctional logistics and support operations.

Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Kristi Noem, Pierre Mayor Steve Harding and Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general.

The unit will report to Fort Hood, Texas, to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas.

This will be the second mobilization for the 152nd CSSB since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The unit first deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2013.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SRST Update.....	2
VA Life Insurance Update .....	3
VA/CNCS Partnership .....	4
VA Crisis Line .....	5
BWN Veterans Act .....	6
PVA Poker Run .....	7
Upcoming Events.....	8

(State offices will be  
closed July 4-5)



# ILLINOIS YOUTH GROUP VISITS STANDING ROCK

Last week, students from the Evangeletes Ministry in Illinois visited the Standing Rock Reservation. While there, they worked on repairs at the Warrior Lodge Veterans Homeless Shelter. Students worked on the deck, repaired the ramp and assisted with plumbing changes. Kudos to this great group of students for their dedication to veterans.



The Evangeletes have been participating in this mission on the Standing Rock Reservation since 2016. The Standing Rock Reservation is located in Corson County and has over 15,000 enrolled members.





# VA TO REDUCE RATES FOR SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

On July 1, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will reduce [Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance \(SGLI\)](#) monthly premium rates from 7 cents per \$1,000 to 6 cents per \$1,000 of insurance, along with [Family SGLI Program \(FSGLI\)](#) premium rates for spousal coverage at all age brackets.

SGLI is a program that provides low-cost term life insurance coverage to eligible service members, while FSGLI provides group term life insurance coverage to the spouses and dependent children of service members insured under [SGLI](#).

"The VA continues to place the interests of service members and their families first by keeping SGLI premiums as low as possible, while ensuring funds are available to pay claims to beneficiaries," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This is just another example of the VA's efforts to provide improved services to veterans."

The SGLI premium decrease impacts 2.1 million active duty service members, Reservist and National Guard members, while the FSGLI premium decrease impacts nearly 1 million of those members who have coverage for their spouses.

This will mean a decrease of \$4.00 a month in premiums for a service member with the maximum \$400,000 of SGLI coverage. Service members with spouses covered under FSGLI will see an additional average monthly premium decrease ranging from 10 to 32% depending on the age and the amount of coverage for the spouse.

The VA regularly reviews the claims experience and the financial position of the program and has reduced premiums whenever possible. Service members with SGLI and FSGLI coverage will begin seeing a change in the deduction from their pay during the month of July.

Reservists drilling (monthly unit training) for retirement points rather than pay or not receiving pay for other reasons, will be billed by their service department for the reduced premium rates beginning in July 2019.

For more information, visit [www.benefits.va.gov/insurance](http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance) for the tables of the new premium rates



# VA/CNCS PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently began partnering with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to engage Senior Corps volunteers in support of the VA's Choose Home Initiative, enabling older veterans to receive needed homemaker and daily living support in their homes, rather than move into health care institutions.

"The VA supports veterans who choose to remain home while receiving the care and services they need," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This partnership will help improve veterans' health and well-being and will aid their families and caregivers through in-home assistance."

CNCS is the federal agency that leads national volunteering and service efforts. Senior Corps volunteers are a nationwide network of service programs for volunteers age 55 or older who commit their time to a wide range of community needs. CNCS mobilizes Senior Corps volunteers to provide homemaker and in-home respite care services to eligible Veterans, so those veterans can remain in their own homes, live more independently and stay close to their families, caregivers and support services.

Homemakers assist with activities of daily living, such as light housekeeping and preparing meals. Respite care services temporarily relieve caregivers of their duties, so they may rest and return refreshed.

Through this interagency collaboration, which was formally agreed to in May, CNCS is providing volunteer support services in the following five communities that are part of the Senior Care Choose Home Program: Colorado Springs, Colorado; Las Vegas, Nevada; Missoula, Montana; Pittsburgh; and San Antonio.

Senior Corps volunteers will receive training about veteran-specific concerns, including suicide awareness and prevention, before providing services in veterans' homes. Those participating in the partnership will also receive ongoing training on a variety of veteran-related topics.

"Through national service, our commitment to veterans is twofold: We serve them and we invite them to serve with us," said Barbara Stewart, CEO of CNCS. "This new Senior Corps project is a unique opportunity to do both, helping aging veterans to 'choose home' while providing others with a second opportunity to serve."

For more information, visit <https://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships>.



# VA VETERANS CRISIS LINE SETTING GOLD STANDARD IN CALL-RESPONSE RATE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' recent release of the 2018 data for the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) confirms the call center continues to outpace last year's metrics by providing faster, more effective assistance to veterans and their loved ones.

VCL's fiscal year 2018 performance metrics show that since 2017, the number of calls routed to contingency crisis call centers decreased from 44,263 to 1,056, and the average speed to answer calls decreased from 8.44 seconds to 7.23 seconds.

"The VCL is there for you if you are in crisis, or if you know someone who you think may be going through a difficult time," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VCL provides quick access to trained, caring and qualified responders able to help service members and Veterans through a crisis and link them to local VA suicide prevention coordinators for more support."

VCL connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with highly trained VA responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat or text. It is now the largest crisis call center in the world and a recognized leader in call-center intervention services. VCL currently answers nearly one-third of all calls placed to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which last year received over 2 million calls.

Since its inception in 2007, VCL responders have answered more than 3.9 million calls, conducted more than 467,000 online chats and responded to more than 123,000 texts. Their efforts have resulted in the dispatch of emergency services nearly 119,000 times to veterans in need.

For more information on VCL, visit [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net). Learn more about the VA's suicide prevention resources and programs at [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention).

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, can call VCL for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, send a text message to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

WELCOME TO THE

## Veterans Crisis Line

Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?

Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach **caring, qualified responders** with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

HOW TO CONNECT WITH A RESPONDER	
<p><b>Call</b></p> <p>1-800-273-8255</p> <p>and Press 1</p>	<p><b>Chat</b></p> <p>Connect online</p>
<p><b>Text</b></p> <p>838255</p>	<p><b>Support for deaf and hard of hearing</b></p> <p>1-800-799-4889</p>

# PRESIDENT SIGNS BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS ACT INTO LAW

The decades-long fight for Blue Water Navy veterans to receive VA disability benefits for illnesses linked to exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War is over.

On Tuesday, June 25, President Trump signed into law H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019. The American Legion-supported legislation will extend disability benefits covering medical conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure to those who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam, known as "Blue Water" Navy veterans.

Veterans who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange if diagnosed with a medical condition associated with the herbicide, according to the Agent Orange Act of 1991. Presumptive diseases of exposure to the herbicide include certain cancers, Parkinson's disease and diabetes. However, this act applied only to veterans who served on land and in Vietnam's inland waterways. H.R. 299 extends these benefits to any military personnel who served on any vessel during the Vietnam War that came within 12 nautical miles of the coastlines of Vietnam.

H.R. 299 further expands coverage and includes the provision that every veteran exposed to herbicides like Agent Orange should receive the same presumptive benefits. A provision in H.R. 299 states, "A veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975," will be eligible for disability compensation for presumptive conditions of herbicide exposure. This will allow veterans who fall into that category and whose claims have been denied or held in pending status to gain access to VA medical care for conditions on the presumptive list.

H.R. 299 will afford spouses of certain veterans whose death was caused by a service-connected disability access to pension benefits. The bill also provides the children of veterans of covered service in Thailand who suffer from spina bifida access to health care, vocational training and rehabilitation, and monetary allowance. (Story and photo courtesy of the American Legion.)



**\*\*Note, the SDDVA Claims Office is working with the VBA and will disseminate more information shortly.**



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

North Central Chapter

**Registration*****5th Annual PVA Poker Run*****Saturday, July 20, 2019****Thirsty Duck Bar & Grill, 945 S. Marion Rd, Sioux Falls**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Passenger: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Fee: \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Single \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Couple

Rider Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form along with  
payment to:

PVA North Central Chapter

209 N. Garfield Ave

Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Shirt Size for each  
registered participant:

S M L XL XX XXX

**REGISTRATION: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM****1st Place \$500.00 2nd Place \$250.00 3rd Place \$100.00****Start: Thirsty Duck****Stops: J&L Harley Davidson-Sioux Falls; Big Urns-Crooks, SD; Shipwreck Bar & Grill-Chester, SD;  
Steve's Bar & Grill-Trent, SD; Norby's-Dell Rapids, SD; Safari Bar & Grill-Renner, SD.****End-Thirsty Duck.****Prizes, Food, Beverages, Music, 50/50 Raffle will be provided during the event. After Ride Party/  
Prizes – 4:30 PM Sharp!!****For more information call: PVA North Central Chapter at 605-336-0494**

Jun 29—Veterans for Veterans Annual Poker Run—Mitchell Depot Bar and Grill—11:00 am (CT)  
Jun 29—State American Legion Commander Homecoming—High Plains Western Heritage Center—Spearfish—Social at 1:30 pm and program at 2:00 pm (CT)  
Jul 2—Pierre CBOC Open House— 1615 N. Harrison Avenue—1:00—3:00 pm (CT)  
Jul 4-5—State Offices Closed  
Jul 17—South Dakota Veterans Council—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Jul 19-21—"Last Out" Performance—Thomas H. Craig Center for the Performing Arts—Vermillion High School—Show times 8:00 pm (CT) on 19-20 and 2:00 pm (CT) on 21st  
Jul 20—PVA 5th Annual Poker Run—Thirsty Duck Bar and Grill (945 S. Marion Road) - Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Jul 20—SD American Legion Auxiliary State President Homecoming—United Methodist Church—Dell Rapids—2:00 pm (CT)  
Jul 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL  
Jul 20—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)  
Jul 27—SDNG Deployment Ceremony for the 152nd Combat Sustainment—Riggs High School—Pierre—2:00 pm (CT)  
Aug 2—American Legion HWY 281 Centennial Run  
Aug 2—American Legion Highway 281 Centennial Run (ND/SD Border to SD/NE Border)  
Aug 3-6—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL  
Aug 17—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)  
Aug 17-18—Sioux Falls Air Show  
Aug 24—Wine and Gala Auction (MidWest Honor Flight Benefit) - Calico Skies Winery  
Aug 26—Sioux Falls Barrel House (MidWest Honor Flight Benefit - 10% all day to MWHF) - 4701 E 54th Street  
Aug 29—Veterans Day at the Fair  
Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School  
Aug 31—15th Annual 727th Transportation/DAV Poker Run—Swiftel Center—Brookings  
Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)  
Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)  
Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course  
Nov 2—2nd Annual Hangar Dance (MidWest Honor Flight Benefit) - Mid America Museum of Aviation—Sioux City, IA—7:00 pm (CT)



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>  
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

